

Rome 30th Nov. 1872

My dear Maria

This is to assure you that I am nearly recovered,
but you should hear of my illness, fortunately I had
my good Dr. Valeriani at my elbow or the fever might
have mastered me - as it is I am very weak
Now having been in some danger, I would
to me that as you are dependant on me & as my
life is only during my life that I would write to
authorise to allow you £30 or more, so that if you
live longer than me you may be provided for. Also
as my rent has been raised $\frac{1}{3}$ & altho I am agreed
to be rent free, yet I feel it my duty to pay something
to the Doctor who makes me so comfortable
Our weather has been so wet & damp that

my cure is slow, but I am really picking up

My house is undergoing great changes for
the better, a new staircase, with a balcony of flowers
but the work will be £100 which is a serious sum
for the good Doctor but he is steadily getting into good
practice

All the arrangements of my house are good
we sit down to dinner which is very pleasant - I
have still my good old servant of 8 years & so I am

altogether better off than I was before

The Doctor's wife & sister are very good housekeepers
& have worked all the chairs & curtains - then they
attend to the kitchen & have a servant girl

This is well as there is always some one to attend
to the house - as I was alone this is a great relief

I was painting & drawing when taken ill
& have had nearly 3 weeks of it, but am in good
spirits - I hope you have not been alarmed about

me - The fever was "perniciosa" of which there
has been much in Rome - I returned from the
mountains in good health, so this fever must have
been in the air - I can now walk but so do

Therefore for future I trust you'll have Arthur
J. & Walter, in all £10. I trust this will
find you comfortable & be sure that my good
children will always think of you whatever
may happen to me

This I take to the Post that it may not fail
for I hear of many letters lost
Your loving Joe

My love to dear Tom & his

This year - for the English not coming one winter would
quite ruin Rome, hotels, lodging house, cork shops &c &c
are all got up for the English & if you could know they are
burnt out of their money you'd scarce believe it

You'll be amused that people will still take me for my son
& talk to me about my ^{father's} friendship for Keats, I explain but I see
they don't quite make it out & just now ^{in England} you're a fashion
sprung up about my friendship for Keats - there ^{are} 2 novels
writing about it & I get letters often, what a joke, how
you'll laugh, meanwhile I'm very much puzzled -

Your friends Mr & Mrs Keats I liked very much & regretted
their short stay, up to this they are the most superior
people who have come - then Charles sent me his for
Mr Ruth again, he was here in the spring

7th December my 79th birth day which I am so fortunate as to
remember & to reflect on the many blessings I enjoy. my
eyesight excellent, my hand steady for my painting
my walking pleasant, my memory surprising and
my health good, the Doctors all agree that I have
a fine constitution, so altogether you may hope
that we shall meet next Summer, what a hope!!
but I depend on great moderation in eating & drinking